

REMARKS

Claims 4-7 are pending. By this Amendment, Claims 1-3 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and Claims 4-7 are added. Because Claims 4-7 are believed to more clearly recite the method recited in original Claims 1-3, Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter is presented herein.

Title

The Title of the application is amended herein to more clearly be indicative of the claimed invention.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §101

Claim 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 for being directed to non-statutory subject matter. In particular, the Office Action notes claim 1 appears to be directed to an apparatus and a method, which is inappropriate. Applicants have canceled Claims 1-3 without prejudice or disclaimer and present new Claims 4-7, which are believed to more clearly recite the inventive method of the instant application. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claim Rejection – 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants have canceled Claims 1-3 without prejudice or disclaimer and present new Claims 4-7, which are believed to more clearly recite the inventive method of the instant application and in a manner believed to be responsive to the rejection. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-3 are objected to for lacking reasonable indents. Claims 2-3 are objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) as being of improper dependent form. Applicants have canceled Claims 1-3 without prejudice or disclaimer and present new Claims 4-7, which are believed to more clearly recite the inventive method of the instant application and in a manner believed to be responsive to the objection such that the claims contain reasonable indents. With regards to the dummy member recited in Claims 5-7, Applicants respectfully submit that when the dummy member is joined to the lower end of the extension optical fiber glass body in advance of or before aligning the lower end of the optical fiber glass body with an upper end of the pull glass member, the dummy member is unified with or integrated into the lower end of the extension optical fiber glass body. As such, the unified or integrated dummy member can be identified or associated with the extension optical fiber glass body. See page 36, line 4 of the application as originally filed. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 5-7 do not contradict that which is recited by Claim 4. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 4,407,667 to Le Noane et al. (Le Noane). Since Claims 1-3 have been canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer and Claims 4-7 are newly presented, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection as if it were applied against Claims 4-7 for the following reason(s).

Claim 4 recites a method for extending an optical fiber glass body using an electric furnace extension apparatus comprising an upper holder which holds an upper end of the extension optical fiber glass body to be extended; a lower holder, provided at a position coinciding with an axial center of the upper holder and facing the upper holder, which holds a lower end of a pull glass member and is pulled toward a lower portion; and an electric furnace provided between the upper holder and the lower holder, the extension method includes the following steps of holding the upper end of the extension optical fiber glass body to be extended by using the upper holder; aligning a lower end of the extension optical fiber glass body with an upper end of the pull glass member being held by the lower holder; joining the lower end of the extension optical fiber glass body and the upper end of the pull glass member by subjecting the lower end of the extension optical fiber glass body and the upper end of the pull glass member to a heat-melt at a maximum temperature portion inside the electric furnace; and moving the maximum temperature portion of the electric furnace to an extending portion and moving the lower holder toward a low position to pull the extension optical fiber glass body downwardly to extend the optical fiber glass body.

According to the extension method of the present invention recited by Claims 4-7, aligning a lower end of the optical fiber glass body with the upper end of the pull glass member (which is held by the lower holder of the electric furnace extension apparatus), joining the lower end of the optical fiber glass body with the upper end of the pull glass member at the coinciding portion by subjecting the upper and lower ends to a heat melt at the maximum temperature portion inside the electric furnace (of the electric furnace extension apparatus), and after that, moving the maximum temperature portion inside

the electric furnace to the extending portion of the optical fiber glass body, then moving the lower holder toward a lower position, the optical fiber glass body is extended.

Immediately after joining the optical fiber glass body with the pull glass member by subjecting them to a heat melt, and then pulling the pull glass member downward, the optical fiber glass body can be extended, and consequently, an efficiency of an extension work is improved. See page 36, line 15 of the instant application.

Applicants respectfully submit Le Noane fails to disclose, teach or otherwise suggest such steps and does not derive the benefits flowing therefrom.

For example, in Le Noane, the location of welding an optical fiber body (the welding station 9) and the location of extending (the drawing-out furnace 16) are separate from each other as shown in the Figure 3. Consequently, under Le Noane, the optical fiber body 20 cannot be extended after being joined with the pulling use glass member 23 after subjecting them to a heat melt as in the claimed invention. That is, under Le Noane, the joining and extending steps cannot be performed using the same, i.e., one, electric furnace, as is performed by the claimed invention.

Further, instead of joining the optical fiber body with the pulling use glass member, a pair of optical fiber bodies (same successive bars 7 and 8, which are regarded as the same parts) are welded in Le Noane.

Moreover, because the location of the optical fiber body (welding station 9) and the location of the extending or drawing out furnace 16 are separate from each other in Le Noane, aligning their respective axial centers is difficult and problematic.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that Le Noane fails to disclose, teach or otherwise suggest each and every step of the claimed method.

To qualify as prior art, each and every feature of a rejected claim must be disclosed by a cited prior art reference. To establish *prima facie* obviousness, each and every feature recited by the rejected claim must be taught or suggested by the applied art of record.

As explained above, Le Noane fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every step recited by Claim 4. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 4 is not anticipated by nor rendered obvious in view of le Noane. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 4 should be deemed allowable.

Claims 5-7 depend from Claim 4. It is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims be deemed allowable at least for the same reason(s). Claim 4 is allowable, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.


Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the outstanding objections and rejections, allowance of Claims 4-7, and the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing docket number 103203.00010.**

Respectfully submitted,
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